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ABSTRACT

A teacher education program designed to select and retain students who have a probability for success is described. The program is a cooperative effort of the Department of Counselor Education and the Department of Elementary Education at Brigham Young University. The prospective teacher is provided experiences, both on campus and in the field, that make possible a careful assessment of the teaching profession and the likelihood of personal compatibility with the teaching role. Advanced students in the Counselor Education Department, under faculty supervision, offer preservice teachers workshops, seminars, consultation, and individual and group counseling. Part of this guidance service includes a Personal Assessment Feedback program which enables the prospective teachers an opportunity to explore the appropriateness of their career choice and also provides counselor and faculty with a framework for helping them in personal and professional development. (JD)

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PROSPECTIVE TEACHER SELECTION AND PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT: USING PRESERVICE COUNSELORS AS FACILITATORS

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Introduction

Two related teacher education functions that are currently beginning to receive significant attention are (1) selecting and retaining teacher candidates who have a reasonable probability for success as classroom teachers and (2) providing personalized training and/or counseling necessary to optimize each prospective teacher's potential for becoming an effective teacher.

The benefits of refined teacher candidate selection processes would be applicable to those who educate teachers as well as those seeking to become classroom teachers. Effective screening, orientation, and counseling methods could save time, money, and effort for both the candidate and the teacher education institution. Deselection decisions that are traumatic for candidates, as well as college faculty members, could be made with less difficulty prior to or shortly after entrance to teacher education programs. The use of "prescriptive personalizing" of teacher education has the potential to optimize the development of each student's unique strengths as well as to provide an avenue for remedial attention for candidates who are in need of specialized assistance.

The critical nature of selection processes are now beginning to gain the attention of accreditation organizations. For example, the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) Standards for Accreditation of Teacher Education, adopted May 1977 and effective 1 January 1979, stated:

> The institution is obliged to systematically determine the factors related to success in its teacher education programs. Among these factors are skills, understandings, and personal characteristics requisite to teaching.

Relating to retention of students in teacher education programs, NCATE indicated:

> The institution has the right and the obligation to consider personal factors and professional competence as well as academic achievement as a basis for permitting a student to continue in a teacher education program.

NCATE also suggested that teacher education institutions should "provide a definitive counseling and advising service for students in teacher education." These functions (screening, retention, and counseling) must be carried out in a fashion that will be both efficient and cost-effective while utilizing the best resources available to the institution.

The Personal Assessment Feedback Program

The Department of Counselor Education and the Department of Elementary Education at Brigham Young University have, for the past nine years, been involved in a cooperative program initially designed by Research and Development Center for Teacher Education at the University of Texas at Austin. This program has been proven to be cost-effective and beneficial to the students who are being trained by both departments.

The professional Elementary Education sequence at BYU (36 hours) is as follows:

El. Ed. 200 — Educational Exploration (2 hours)
Introduction to attributes of a teacher. Self-exploration of those attributes. Guided observations in educational settings.

El. Ed. 300 — Teacher Assistant Experience (4 hours)
Introduction to principles of learning and teaching. One-half day in a public school for eight weeks.

El. Ed. 340 — Children's Literature (2 hours)
Evaluation of significant children's books.

El. Ed. 350 A — Methods of Teaching Reading/Language Arts (4 hours).
Clarification of teaching processes for teaching word recognition, decoding skills, comprehension, and the components or oral and written expression.

El. Ed. 350 B — Methods of Teaching Math (3 hours).
Methods of teaching math.

El. Ed. 350 C — Methods of Teaching Science/Social Studies (4 hours)
Methods of teaching science and social studies, including reading techniques applied to content. Also, principles of multicultural education.

El. Ed. 370 Practicum in diagnosing and prescribing corrective procedures in reading (6 hours). Practicum in language arts, math, social studies, and science in school setting where feasible.

El. Ed. 400 Classroom Teaching Experience (8 hours)
Student teaching for 8 weeks in a public school

El. Ed. 451 Instructional Media (1 hour)
Basic media production skills, emphasizing the visual techniques.

El. Ed. 452 The Professional Teacher (1 hour)
The teacher and the school: employment, control, professional relations, the law, finance, and professional affiliation.

Students typically begin the elementary education program during the first or second semester of their sophomore year, but are not granted entrance to the program until they have successfully completed El. Ed. 200 and 300. During these courses, the prospective teacher is provided experiences (both on campus and field) that result in the candidate's making a careful examination of himself, the teaching profession, and his compatibility with the teaching role. Faculty members also carefully examine each candidate during the two introductory courses. During these initial experiences, much of the departmental screening and counseling is accomplished.

Prerequisite to officially entering the elementary education program at BYU a student must:

1. Have a 2.5 G.P.A. (on a 4 point scale),
2. Pass a spelling and grammar test,
3. Pass a speech and hearing examination.
4. Complete the university general education math, English, social science, and science requirements,
5. Successfully pass a reading fundamentals examination, and
6. Complete the Personal Assessment Feedback Battery (P.A.F.)

BYU's Counselor Education Program prepares students at the Masters and Doctorate level to serve as counselors in school, college, and agency settings. In addition to completing coursework, prospective counselors are placed in practicum settings throughout their training.

The counselor education program also offers guidance services particularly for students who need and/or desire counseling in the College of Education. Counselor Education students, under supervision, offer personal development workshops, seminars, consultation, and individual and group counseling.

Part of this guidance service includes the Personal Assessment Feedback (PAF) program. Advanced masters students and doctoral candidates may apply for specialized training to become PAF counselors. Only those with experience and demonstrated counseling competency are selected.

The Purpose of the PAF Program is primarily four fold:

1. to provide prospective teachers with personal data and opportunity to explore the appropriatess of their career choice,
2. to provide teacher education program faculty with data and impressions regarding specific student strengths, limitations, and alternative options where continuation in the program is deemed inappropriate,
3. to establish prospective teacher/counselor interaction which may lead to futher involvment by the counselor in helping the prospective teacher in personal and professional development, and
4. to provide training for prospective counselors in the use of assessment, counseling, and consultation methods with prospective teachers.

The PAF Battery consists of the five following instruments:

1. The Autobiography provides personal, family, work, and school background data. It gives a brief life history and offers the counselor insights regarding family interaction and other attitudes relevant to self and others.

2. The Self-Report Inventory is comprised of 48 statements regarding self in which the student responds on a "like me" or "not like me" scale. Computerized scoring yields comparisons between the student and the norm group on eleven dimensions as follows: attitude toward self, attitude toward others, attitude toward young children, attitude toward authority figures, attitude toward work, attitude toward life's uncertainties, attitude toward parents, attitude toward the future, general outlook on life, expressions of attitudes, and relative self-others valuation.

3. The Adjective Self-Description lists 56 adjectives with computerized scoring on seven dimensions: social attitude, social behavior, performance habits, social orientation, emotional stability, idealogical orientation, and appearance and charm.

4. The One-word Sentence Completion provides 62 incomplete sentences which relate to self and teaching. This structured freedom of response focuses on eleven personal areas.

5. The Directed Imagination requires the student to write four fictional stories about teachers and their experiences. They are given four minutes to write each story.

A PAF Counseling Session is held with each prospective teacher. A PAF counselor reviews the total battery of PAF instruments, integrates them and formulates impressions and tentative hypothesis for discussion in the one-hour session. Topics may include potential strengths or limitations which may affect the teacher's performance, areas of concern or anxiety, and the appropriateness of teaching as a career choice for each prospective teacher.

The counselor attempts to provide a safe environment for self-exploration and a developmental review. The session typically culminates with an action plan which may include support and reassurance for the education student's goals, encouragement toward self-deselection from teacher education, further counseling, participation in workshops, reflection, reading, sessions with teacher education faculty, referral to other agencies, etc.

Consultation between curriculum and instruction faculty and PAF counselors and/or counselor education faculty often takes place with student permission and for student benefit. While maintaining personal confidentiality, counselors and teacher educators join to help students deal with crises, resolve problems, and make decisions to maximize each potential teacher's successful development.

Benefits of PAF to the Elementary Education Program include:

1. Provides critical personalized data regarding the potential for teaching success of specific candidates,
2. Encourages self-deselection from the program when data supports such an action, or affirms teaching as a career selection,
3. Provides a basis for a healthy working relationship between the Counselor Education Program and the Department of Elementary Education,
4. Helps the candidate establish a meaningful relationship with a counselor early in the professional training sequence,
5. Provides a resource for students in crises or those with personal, emotional, behavioral, or social maladjustment,
6. Educates the prospective teacher as to a valuable support system (counseling) available to the classroom teacher and elementary students, and
7. Makes the prospective teacher aware of his personal strengths that can optimize teaching effectiveness.

Benefits of PAF to the Counselor Education Program include:

1. Fosters later counselor/teacher association for mutual benefit,
2. Provides assessment and counseling experience for counselors-in-training,
3. Increases counselor's awareness and appreciation for teachers' concerns,
4. Provides graduate assistantships for several counselors, and
5. Offers a model of inter-departmental teaming of professionals.

Research results suggest that:

1. Prospective teachers perceive PAF counseling as extremely valuable in their decision-making and personal growth,

2. The PAF feedback seems to increase the self concept of prospective teachers,

3. Teachers tend to improve their ability to appropriately self-disclose through PAF counseling,

4. A significant relationship exists between several PAF dimension scores and reported teaching success, and

5. Prospective teachers value the opportunity to explore the teaching profession and other career alternatives with a skilled and objective counselor.